SERMON DELIVERED

AT

SOLEMN OBSEQUIES

OF THE

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Wm. I. McGarvey

Rector of the Church of the Holy Infancy

South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

on March 6th, 1924

By

REV. EDWARD HAWKS

He made twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach. (St. Mark iii., 14.)

"When Our Divine Lord came into this world, He entered it through the loving relationship of a human family, the Holy Family. When He began to lay the foundations of His Church, He did so through a human companionship. He chose twelve men as his constant companions. Thus it was that the closest human relationships were consecrated to an eternal purpose. The Incarnation was an extension of that eternal love of the Blessed Trinity; and the Catholic Church is an extension of the Incarnation. With ever widening circles that relationship and that fellowship have come down through the ages to our times and exist amongst us in that organization known as the Catholic Church.

"The parish is a symbol as well as a unit of the whole. The whole Church in Heaven, in Purgatory and on earth has one Head in Christ. The visible Church militant has its visible head, the Pope. The diocese has its visible head, the Bishop; the parish has its pastor. The whole is a family, and the parts are families. And they are made to the image of the love of the Blessed Trinity, of which the purely human likeness is the relationship of parents and their offspring.

"So, when a parish loses its pastor, it is as though the father of the family had died. And no words can express the truth more clearly. You have lost your spiritual father. That he was such in fact as well as theory, you know full well. In the four years that he was amongst you, he endeared himself to you. Of your intimate knowledge of his varied interests, I need not speak. You know them better than I do. You will never forget the words that fell from his lips when he exercised that most important office of preaching to you the Truth of the kingdom of God. The sight of his familiar figure at the altar will not fade from your memory. Of the loving interest that he had in his brother priests and co-operators; in the Sisters of St. Joseph in the convent; in the school children; in the young men in Lehigh University; in ministrations to the sick and dying as well as to those who had to face the battle of life, I need not remind you. You will, however, expect me, rather, to speak of the career of Monsignor McGarvey before you knew him; for you are not in ignorance of the fact that the latter years that he spent with you were years of sickness when his life's work was almost done, and when his closest friends had already seen the hand of death upon him. It is of the days when he was in the prime of life that I shall rather speak; and I know that you would wish me to speak thus, because in the Providence of God his life was of very far reaching influence.

Of Deeply Religious Character

"From his youngest days Monsignor McGarvey had sought the companionship of the family of God. He grew up amongst those whose hearts had been fired with the hope of a return of the Ages of Faith. The Oxford movement started by Cardinal Newman some hundred years ago awoke the English-speaking world to a renewed interest in the kingdom of God, so often spoken of in the Gospels. Tired of the endless negations and divisions of Protestantism, they found in the Catholic Church the identity of that kingdom. To membership in the Catholic Church they claimed a share. They argued that the succession of Bishops in the Episcopal Church had never been broken, and that no essential doctrine of the whole Church before the great disaster of the sixteenth century had been denied. All that was necessary, so they said, was to revive the use of Catholic practices. And so began that movement that has changed the whole appearance of the Anglican Church. Although some, like Newman himself, quickly saw the fallacy in this reasoning, the majority accepted the movement as being of divine origin; and with an enthusiasm and devotion,

almost without rival, gave themselves up to the work of deliberately destroying all traces of Protestantism in the Episcopal Church. They hoped also that the day would come when this Church would once more be restored to unity in a corporate capacity to the Chief See of Christendom, founded by St. Peter. It was in this circle of influence that Monsignor McGarvey grew up. It was with the belief that he would be a true priest of the Catholic Church that he offered himself for the Episcopalian ministry. It was because he thought that the Episcopal Church was of the household of the Faith that he drew to himself those who started a religious order known as the Companions of the Holy Saviour. It was with this conviction that he spent those years of his life, that others devote to pleasure, to the observance of a hard and rigorous rule.

"Had I time I might tell you of the life at St. Elizabeth's in the city of Philadelphia, where he and his companions spent so many years in preaching the doctrine of the kingdom of God.

Became Leader of Anglicanism

"But Monsignor McGarvey was not merely the rector of an Episcopal Church, and not only the head of a flourishing religious community. He was much more. He became one of the most widely known authorities upon Anglicanism. Although of a very retiring and diffident disposition, a man altogether opposed to any kind of self-assertion, he became a leader of opinion. Anglicanism is made up of opinions. There are as many schools of thought as there are days in the year. With no supreme authority, it is the custom to defer to the opinions and ideas of those who are better known. In this way Monsignor McGarvey became, after the death of Dr. Percival, the leader of an American school of Anglicanism. This school had certain marked characteristics. It was, to begin with, intensely 'Anglican'; that is, it professed the most devoted obedience to anything that could be said to have ever been decided by Anglican authority. Whilst ritualists of various kinds were imitating Roman and Greek customs, the McGarvey school held fast to Episcopalian modes of worship. One of the reasons for this was their spirit of obedience; and the other was the true love that they bore for their own Communion. It is no exaggeration to say that Monsignor McGarvey loved the Episcopal Church. He loved the Prayer Book, although he was conscious of its defects. He loved every word of it and he compiled one of the best editions of it, one that is still in wide use. He loved the English Bible, which he knew almost by heart. Few people have had such an intimate knowledge of the Bible as he. His sermons were full of the Bible. He loved the English hymns, many of them of Catholic origin. He loved the great leaders of the Oxford movement, many of whom he knew in their old age. If anyone in this country had a passionate sentimental attachment to the Episcopal Church, it was your late rector, Monsignor McGarvey And of the history of that Church and of its institutions and of its ministers and Bishops, no one had a more intimate knowledge. By reason of his continual study of the history and the development of what is known as the Catholic revival, he became an authority amongst Episcopalians on all questions that had to do with the doctrine of the Sacraments, with liturgy, with Canon Law and with the religious life. His pen was active in the defense of a Catholic interpretation of the Anglican formularies. He compiled one of the best books on liturgy. He wrote the constitution for the leading Episcopalian religious community.

"Why, then, did he leave the Episcopal Church? It has been stated that his reasons for leaving, and I see this repeated in the daily papers, were due to causes operative long before he actually became a Catholic. It has even been hinted that his eventual secession was part of a gradually developed conspiracy to destroy the very movement, to which he had devoted his life. Nothing can be farther from

the truth. Immediately after he left the Episcopal Church, he circulated a pamphlet in which gave his true reasons. He showed in that pamphlet that he had left the Episcopal Church because he had received a great shock and a great awakening.

The Richmond Convention

"The shock was what he considered a betrayal. The awakening brought conviction that things were not as he had supposed. The shock was the successful launching of a Modernist movement to change the doctrinal character of the Episcopal Church. This took place at the general convention of the Episcopal Church, held at Richmond in 1907. It was previously rumored that something was going to happen. The Catholic-minded Anglicans had no fear, because they were well represented both in the house of Bishops and in the house of delegates. Consternation, however, reigned when it was learned that the Modernists had carried their central attack and had, by the votes of the very men on whom reliance was placed, succeeded in passing a new canon, by which it was possible to admit heretical preachers into Episcopalian pulpits. Instead of dying at their posts, the Bishops had surrendered their fort. It is true they pleaded expediency. They argued that they had prevented a worse defeat by accepting a lesser one. The new canon was carefully worded. They hoped to make it a dead letter. But they helped to pass it and it met the requirements of the Modernists. Within a few days of its adoption, the Episcopalian pulpits were legally occupied by those who denied the fundamental beliefs of that Church. This was the shock. And allow me to say that Dr. McGarvey was not the only one who felt it. I could give you the names of a very large number of Episcopalian clergymen, with whom Dr. McGarvey had no immediate contact, who at once, as the result of the passing of this canon, made preparations for leaving the Episcopal Church. There was a movement, in which Dr. McGarvey had no part whatever, to form an Episcopalian schism and if possible form a union with one of the eastern schismatic churches. One will only have to consult the files of both the ecclesiastical and secular papers of the time to see that the shock, of which I speak, was widespread and serious. The Modernists, on the other hand, celebrated their victory by a concerted use of their pulpits by non-Episcopalian ministers and thus fanned the flames of party hatreds.

"The shock brought a revelation. The pulpit was a sacred thing to Dr. McGarvey. He had always maintained that the preaching of the Gospel was the first work of the Church. Hitherto, it had been possible to maintain that the Episcopalian pulpit had never been used to attack the fundamentals of belief. He now had the evidence that this was not so. He foretold that worse would come. In a word, he lost his faith in Episcopalianism as a part of the Catholic Church. He began to think that the 'open pulpit' was the logical end of Episcopalianism as well as of all forms of sectarian religion. For him the authority of the preacher as a messenger of the Christ was gone when the pulpit could be occupied by teachers of every kind of belief. The 'open pulpit canon' was for him, as he himself expressed it, a hole in the wall by which he looked out and found himself imprisoned in a false system.

Enters the Church

"He came to the conclusion that it was his duty to resign his charge. But what a situation to face! You will know, by your acquaintanceship with him, the tenderness of his nature. He was deeply affected by friendship. He loved the people at St. Elizabeth's, and he loved those who were associated with him in the Companions of the Saviour. How could he ever explain to those, whom he loved, his reasons for taking the step that he did? Perhaps that is why, after that one pamphlet, he never wrote anything concerning his conversion. There were two great difficulties. How should he

explain to those, whom he left, the reality of that ministerial relation that he had with them. He had said Mass, as he believed, for them for twenty-five years. He had heard their confessions for the same time. He had buried their dead, and baptized their children. Were these ministrations in vain? Did he deny the validity of his work as a minister? The other difficulty was to explain to those of the household of Faith, to the members of the Catholic Church, how he could have remained so long out of the Church. Would Catholics be able to understand how a minister of a body, calling itself the Protestant Episcopal Church, could for twenty-five years assume all the duties of a Catholic priest? He shrank from revealing his heart. Perhaps he was right. These things could hardly have been written without pain to those whom he had left. He never wrote them. This does not mean that he never spoke of them. This does not mean that he did not have the most convincing arguments for all that he had done. This did not mean that he had not made arrangements for the complete vindication of his conversion to Rome and of his most sincere belief that he had done right.

"As a Catholic he was at once at home. He went almost immediately to our Seminary at Overbrook and, refusing all relaxations, took part in the life and studies there as though he had been born in the Faith. Of all the students, he was one of the most popular. At recreation time he was always surrounded with happy, laughing students, to whom he made himself beloved, not by speaking of himself and of his life but by interesting himself in theirs. He rarely spoke to anyone of the Episcopal Church, except to those who had been associated with him. He went to the Catholic University in the fall of 1910 and was ordained priest at Christmas time the same year. Since then he was a curate at the Church of the Holy Child, and also at the Church of St. James in Philadelphia. In 1918, after having been an assistant for eight years, he was appointed rector of this great church. How he longed for health to be able to do more for you all. How often he spoke of your simple faith and loyalty. In 1921 he was elevated to the dignity of a prelate at the prayers of our beloved Cardinal. It was also his honor to take a prominent part in the consecration ceremonies of our reigning pontiff. Of this honor he was supremely proud. And he told us that one of the happiest days of his life was when he was bearing the canopy over the Holy Father in the basilica at Rome.

"Harvest of the Open Pulpit"

"He will be remembered as the one who marked a turning point in Episcopalian history. The great hindrance to the progress of Modernism in the Episcopal Church had been the doctrine of the Apostolical succession held by most conservative Episcopalians. The 'open pulpit' was the entering wedge destined to destroy this belief. 'The Churchman,' the leading Modernist paper, said as much. It welcomed the 'open pulpit canon' as something that in its own words had changed the Episcopal Church.

"The only Bishop who voted against it called it the first step in a course of progressive apostacy. This was Dr. McGarvey's opinion. He called the 'open pulpit' a 'principle of death,' by which the Catholic character of the Oxford movement would be destroyed. Has he not been proved to be a true prophet? I do not deny that the movement toward Rome does still exist in the Episcopal Church. It does, but it has a new character. It is now avowedly unconstitutional. To change the Episcopal Church in its corporate character, which was the hope of the early days of the movement, is at an end. The legislation that opened the pulpits to every kind of doctrine is now reaping its harvest. From the pulpits of the Episcopal Church you can now hear the fundamental principles of Christianity denied. Such things had never happened before.

The Episcopal Church is changed. It now proclaims itself one of the sects and is occupied in arranging some sort of union with them. The isolated communities of High Churchmen cannot stem the flood of unbelief. They have adopted the principle of independence and do as is right in their own eyes. Such a situation was entirely alien to Dr. McGarvey. He foresaw it; he foretold it and, behold, it has come true. Day by day we read of Episcopalian rectors defying their Bishops and denying official doctrines. This is the harvest of the 'open pulpit.'

"The conversion of Dr. McGarvey was without a doubt one of the most stirring events that has ever taken place in the Episcopal Church. It is true that there have been other noted converts, but none ever occupied his outstanding place. He has been called the American Newman and in some respects this is true. When it became certain that he was going to Rome. a large number of clergymen followed him. Of these the majority became Catholic priests.

Time Has Written His Epitaph

"I need not ask you to pray for his soul. I know you will do this from love as well as from duty. He was always very conscious of his imperfections. It was indeed one of the lovable things in his character that he was in perpetual fear of having failed in his duties. He was for ever asking pardon for imagined faults. He never adopted a sanctimonious pose, but always reckoned himself the chief of sinners. To those who knew him well, it was a mark of his character to be forgiving. To those who tried to blacken his character, when he left the Episcopal Church, he never gave an answer. He knew that time would write his epitaph. And this is true. It is now sixteen years since his conversion; but his influence in the Episcopal Church is not forgotten. It is still evident that his conversion is causing unrest. It still has to be explained away. It is still necessary to prove that he was wrong. But we know that he was right; and we also know that every moment of his life as a Catholic proves that he himself was convinced that he was right."

Father Hawks, at the conclusion of his sermon, read the following letter, written to Dr. McGarvey by the then head of the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania, Bishop Whitaker:

DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA
12th and Walnut Streets,
Philadelphia, Pa.
May 8, 1908

My Dear Doctor McGarvey,

I have not been indifferent to the contents of your letter, although it has remained unacknowledged for four days. My point of view is so different from yours that I do not find it easy to put myself in your place. That which you assume to be a fact, seems to me a mistaken conception, and therefore the conclusions which you draw from it do not seem to me to follow. In one respect I believe I do heartily sympathize with you, and that is in your desire to do the will of God. In this I have confidence in you that you are sincere, and I join my prayers with yours that He may make you know what is His will concerning you. I shall look with deep interest for what you may write me more at length, and I am

Always faithfully yours,
(Signed) O. W. WHITAKER.

The Open Pulpit in the Episcopal Church

(Editorial in The Catholic Standard and Times March 8, 1924)

The lamented death of Monsignor McGarvey has revived the memory of the Open Pulpit discussion in the Episcopal Church. Someone has carefully broadcast, through the agency of the daily papers, the statement that the deceased prelate did not leave the Episcopal Church on account of the disastrous legislation of 1907, but for causes long anterior to that date. This information is supposed to depend upon the authority of the late Bishop Whitaker, who was then head of the Episcopalian Church of this city.

It is hardly necessary to point out the malice of this statement. If this be true, it means nothing less than giving the lie to all that Monsignor McGarvey did and said at that memorable time. And yet, of course, there is a grain of truth in it. There always is a grain of truth in every efficient slander. This is the grain of truth. Conversion to the Catholic Church is a positive thing. To become a Catholic, merely because one is leaving some other religious body is indefensible. One cannot fall into the Catholic Church as one falls into indifference, or as one falls into unbelief. The reason why Dr. McGarvey, being disillusioned as to the Episcopal Church, became a Catholic rather than a Unitarian or a free thinker, was, of course, due to causes anterior to the passing of the Open Pulpit Canon. One is not disposed to become a Catholic merely because one ceases to be an Episcopalian. He sought entrance into the Church because he had long agreed to the proposition that if he could not be a "Catholic" in the Episcopal Church it would be his duty to be a Catholic in the Catholic Church. But surely this was not the reason for his conversion. We venture to suggest that fully half of the Episcopal ministers at this moment have the same thought in their minds. If at any time something happens in their religious experience that convinces them that they can no longer be "Catholics" in the Episcopal Church, it would be hardly true to say that this something would not be the chief cause why they might decide to "go over to Rome." This, then, is the grain of truth. Dr. McGarvey and his associates had, as every High Church minister has, a more or less undefined thought in his mind that, if the Episcopal Church failed him, it would be his duty to become a Catholic and Roman Christian.

That it was the Open Pulpit Canon that convinced him that the time had come when the Episcopal Church had failed him, there is not the least manner of doubt. Had the Open Pulpit Canon not been passed, he would probably have died as rector of St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church in this city. It is easy after the lapse of sixteen years to discount the importance of the Open Pulpit Canon. So many other things have happened since to bring the Episcopalian pulpit into disrepute that this Canon may now seem comparatively harmless. But let us remember that this was not the general opinion at the time.

In 1907 the Episcopalian world was rocked to its foundation by the new legislation. Some quotations from leading opinions at the time will make this clear. "The Churchman," the leading Modernist weekly, stated in it issue of November 26, 1907, that "the Richmond Convention has changed the Episcopal Church." The "Church Standard" of November 2, 1907, stated that "it is the simple truth that this convention was the most liberal in the history of the church" meaning, of course, most "liberal" in a theological sense. Dr. Cyrus T. Brady, the distinguished rector of an Episcopal Church of this city said: "I felt that those who favored the opening of the pulpit were contending for a principle; and that the only vital thing was to get the principle recognized; and that when the principle was recognized the

details would sooner or later adapt themselves." It is hardly necessary to explain that Dr. Brady was speaking of the recognition of non-Episcopalian ministers as being as validly ordained as the ministers of the Episcopal Church. Dr. Garland, now Bishop of Pennsylvania, stated in the "Church Standard" of January 11, 1908, that "the speeches of those who favored the amendment and of those who opposed it shewed that this intention was clearly understood by all." The intention was the opening of pulpits to all kinds of ministers.

Senator Pepper, who took part in the debate, is quoted in the "Church Standard" of the same date as saying: "We cannot look around us at the work being done by our brethren of other names without being convinced that the Spirit of God is speaking to the world through them. And if these brethren have any word of instruction or exhortation for the people, then in God's name let us vote aye." It is believed that Senator Pepper's speech was what determined the final vote. Bishop Doane, one of the most distinguished clergyman of the Episcopal Church, described the Canon in the "Churchman" of November 30, 1907, as meaning that "men not in our Orders, not authorized in any technical sense to officiate in our Churches, who have a message to deliver, a message from God which our people need to hear, can now, without any apparent violation of our canon law or any interference with the teaching of the preface of our ordinal" deliver their message. Bishop White, in his address to his diocesan convention subsequent to the General Convention, made this statement: "the notion prevails that ultimately, for the sake of unity, the Episcopal Church will surrender one after another of its pet ideas and, in proper language, go over to the Protestant position in all their matters. I am not prepared to take the first step in this course of progressive apostacy."

The notion of progressive apostacy exactly describes the course of the Episcopal Church since 1907. It has now reached the point where a minister can deny the divinity of Our Divine Lord from the pulpit. The Bishops who betrayed the Church in the Richmond Convention are now powerless to stem the flood that is pouring through the gates that they helped to open. No need now to invite Arians to speak in Anglican pulpits; the clergymen have themselves said worse things than Arius ever uttered.

As to the assertion that Bishop Whitaker knew that it was not the Open Pulpit that caused the conversion of Dr. McGarvey, we will quote from a letter of his. This letter is dated May 8, 1908; that is, it was written at the very time that Dr. McGarvey resigned. Indeed, it is an answer to his letter of resignation. It is printed in the report of the funeral in this issue. It will be plain to all that Bishop Whitaker, although disagreeing with Dr. McGarvey's interpretation of the new legislation, throws no doubt on the sincerity of his reasoning. He says in part: "In one respect I believe I do heartily sympathize with you, and that is, in your desire to do the will of God. In this I have confidence in you that you are sincere, and I join my prayers with yours that He may make you know His will concerning you." How could he call Dr. McGarvey sincere, if he knew that he was concealing the real cause of his conversion?